FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number	USGS Quad	Area(s)	Form Number
12-48	ORLEANS	G	EAS.115

NR HD 2001

Town/City: Town of Eastham

Place: *(neighborhood or village)*:
Old Town Center

Address: 20 Salt Pond Road

Historic Name: Knowles – Cole House

Uses: Present: single-family residence

Original: single-family residence

Date of Construction: 1803-10

Source: tax lists, censuses, vital records

Style/Form: Federal/Cape Cod

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:
Foundation: brick

Wall/Trim: wood shingle/wood

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
Domestic barn, ca. 1810

Major Alterations *(with dates)*:
Wings added NW end, rear, 20th c.

Condition: good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.71

Setting: The house is situated in a historic community group known as the Old Town Center. The historic properties have been subdivided and now are in the midst of mid-20th-century residential development.

Photograph

View from south.

Locus Map (north at top)

Source: Mass GIS Oliver Parcel Viewer

Recorded by: Kathryn Grover & Neil Larson
Larson Fisher Associates

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date: June 2020

☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Knowles – Cole House is a one-story wood frame single dwelling with a gable roof and a traditional center-chimney plan. It has a five-bay front façade with a center entrance and transom framed by pilasters with lozenges in panels at their bases and capitals. Windows contain nine-over-six sash. The end wall exposed on the southeast side contains two windows on the main floor and one centered in the gable. One-story wings have been added to the rear and northwest end. The rear wing contains a kitchen with an entrance and porch on the northwest side; shed dormers have been raised on both sides. The other wing is more recent. A small story-and-a-half domestic barn is located behind the house. Its wagon door has been replaced with a standard door and window; the pent for the original door remains. A shed-roof wing was added to the northwest side, perhaps for an early garage, and contains double doors of recent construction. The house is sited close to its Locust Street frontage screened by thick foliage that wraps around onto Salt Pond Road interrupted only by a driveway leading to the rear of the house and the barn. There are yards at the extremities of the Locust and Salt Pond Road frontages.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The earliest part of the house now numbered 20 Salt Pond Road appears to have been built about 1805 by Jonathan Knowles 1870-1866), who in that year acquired Abigail Atwood's share of most of the Eastham real estate that had belonged to her father Richard Atwood (1741-1801).[1] No deeds have survived that document the sale of the parcel to Richard Atwood, and censuses indicate that he lived in Eastham from at least 1790 until he died; his wife, Ruth Paine Atwood, died in 1803. Their daughter Abigail sold Knowles half of her share in her father's homestead, and the absence of other deeds from the family at the same time suggests that Knowles did not occupy the Atwood house; it seems instead to have passed to his son Joshua Paine Atwood (1784-1843). Jonathan Knowles, one of the sons of John and Susannah Walker Knowles, married Rebecca Lewis of Wellfleet in 1809, and the couple moved to Chelmsford (now Lowell) about 1810. In 1813 Jonathan Knowles sold his house and four acres of "enclosed land" to Freeman Knowles and Samuel Freeman in common, and the deed identified the parcel as part of the farm formerly belonging to Joshua Paine Atwood.[2]

Freeman Knowles, born in Orleans in 1779, was the son of Benjamin and Mary Brown Knowles. He married Fanny Smith at Eastham in 1803; his sister Lydia married her third cousin Joshua Knowles, Jonathan Knowles's brother, and that Knowles family also lived in this neighborhood. Freeman and Fanny Knowles had eight children—Nathan S. (1804-46), Benjamin (1808-26), Franklin (1806-79), Freeman (1810-38), Jerusha (1812-33), Lucinda (1814-15), another Lucinda (1816-99), and Thomas (1819-1900). The 1810 and 1820 Eastham censuses clearly show the family in this part of Eastham, and the age configurations shown there exactly match the family composition.

Freeman Knowles died in 1827, and his widow at some point moved to Boston. In 1840 and 1842, she and four of her children deeded the property set off to her as her dower share after her husband's death to William Chipman Cobb (1809-65), the son of Thomas and Abigail Freeman Cobb of Eastham.[3] Cobb lived in Natick, and in 1861 he sold the property, identified here as twelve acres, to his brother Thomas Cobb (1807-86) for $425.[4] The 20 Salt Pond Road house is shown on the 1858 and 1880 maps, but in neither instance is a name attached to it; it may be that Cobb rented the property; his own house is depicted in 1880 on the west side of County Road just northeast of 20 Salt Pond Road.

In 1887, the year after Thomas Cobb's death, four of his five children deeded their fifth shares in the property to Austin Everett Cole (1859-1928).[5] Cole had a connection to the property: he was the son of Joshua Cole (1835-83) and Sophia C. Cobb (1836-73), the fifth of Thomas Cobb's children. After Sophia Cobb Cole died, her fifth share fell to the three children—Austin, Abbie T.

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[1] Abigail Atwood to Jonathan Knowles, 5 February 1805, BCD 998061:98.
[2] Johnathan [sic] Knowles to Freeman Knowles and Samuel Freeman, 7 June 1813, BCD 999041:320.
[3] Franklin Knowles to William C. Cobb, 31 October 1840, BCD 41:435; Fanny Knowles, Nathan S. Knowles, Franklin Knowles, Thomas Knowles, all Eastham, and Timothy and Lucinda Jarvis, Brewster, to William C. Cobb, 11 April 1842, BCD 35:452.
[4] Wm C Cobb, Natick, to Thomas Cobb, 13 August 1861, BCD 78:523.
[5] Roland D. Cobb, Eastham; George P. Cobb, Worcester; Solomon T. Cobb, Boston; and Amelia T. Burlingham, Woonsocket, RI, to Austin E. Cole, 17 March 1887, BCD 412:343.

(1862-84), and Mary R. (1867-1940) Cole. In 1904 Sophia C. Mayo of Brockton, the daughter of Abbie T. Cole and her husband George O. Mayo, deeded her one-third of the fifth interest to her uncle Austin Cole. But not until 1928, the year Austin Cole died, did his sister Mary R. Cole Borden deed her interest in 20 Salt Pond Road to the Harriet M. Cole, Austin Cole's widow and second wife.[6]

The 1902 Eastham directory lists Austin E. Cole as a farmer living on Main Street (Salt Pond Road was Main Street before the state highway was realigned) "opposite" Locust Road. His sister Mary, not yet married and working an "needle specialist" in Boston, was a summer resident there. In 1883, the year his father Joshua died, Austin Cole had married Eulalia Addie Savage (1862-1902), daughter of Eastham farmer James Savage, and six years after her death he married again, to Harwich native Harriet Mudge Nickerson. The 1910 census lists Cole as a farmer living in this neighborhood with his second wife, son Roger Delwin Cole (born 1897) from his first marriage, and a ten-year-old African American boarder named John Williams. Another child, Minnie Cecilia, born in 1884, lived with her grandfather James Savage in 1910 and became a school teacher in Norwood. In 1920 Cole was a truck farmer working with his son Roger.

Austin Cole died in January 1928, and the widowed Harriet M. Cole remained at 20 Salt Pond Road. The 1929 Eastham directory documents that she ran a variety store in the building; local history states that it was a candy store that catered to children after school and was operating in the 1930s.[7] In 1930 Hattie Cole had the income of two boarders, Sarah M. Cobb, who had earlier visited her often, and five-year-old "state child" Frank Barton. After Hattie Nickerson Cole died in 1933, 20 Salt Pond Road passed to her siblings, and in 1934 they sold the five-acre parcel with the house and outbuildings and the nine-acre parcel Joshua Cole had acquired from Joshua Knowles to Lesiie E. Chase.[8]

Less than two years later Chase sold the house and one acre to Robert T. Weston and his wife Ruth Boddy Weston.[9] Weston became the second minister to occupy 20 Salt Pond Road. Born in Slayton, Minnesota, Robert Terry Weston (1898-1988) was a Unitarian minister in Schenectady, New York, in 1936, but he had earlier been pastor at Follen Unitarian Church in East Lexington and at the First Unitarian Church in Trenton, New Jersey. By 1940 he returned to Lexington as minister of the First Congregational Unitarian Society, and in the early 1940s he was president of the Unitarian Fellowship for Social Justice. In 1927 Weston married Kansas native Ruth Boddy (1902-95) in Colorado, and the couple had sons Richard, Robert T. Jr., and Clayton. Over the course of his career Weston also held pastorates in Louisville, Omaha, Fort Lauderdale and Boca Raton in Florida, and Bakersfield, California. [10]

In June 1937 the *Hyannis Patriot* noted that the Westons had recently acquired the former home of Austin Cole and "are having many repairs made on the house."[11] Cape newspapers reported the Weston family's visits to their summer place and Weston's occasional sermons for Unitarian or Universalist churches in Barnstable, Eastham, and Brewster. In 1953 the Westons registered the property and sold it to Frederick H. and Grace Vance Jewell of Dobbs Ferry, New York, who owned it for the next thirty-five years. Frederick Harris Jewell (1897-1985) was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and was working as an advertising agency copywriter in Chicago in 1920. In 1926 he married Grace Vance Anderson of Mount Vernon, New York. By that time he was the field executive for the Monmouth County, New Jersey, Council of the Boy Scouts, and worked to organized troops there and in other New Jersey towns. Jewell had earlier spent four years in China and in 1928 was sent by manufacturing firm H. L. Ritchie as a sales representative in Shanghai. By 1940 he and his family had returned to the United States and were living in Windham, Connecticut, where he was a field salesman for the paper-making machinery firm Smith and Winchester Manufacturing Company. The Jewells initially summered at 20 Salt Pond Road and were living in town permanently by the 1960s. Jewell is said to have managed the restoration of Eastham's Center School and its use as the Eastham Historical Society's museum in 1966.

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[6] Roland D. Cobb, Eastham; George P. Cobb, Worcester; Solomon T. Cobb, Boston; and Amelia T. Burlingham, Woonsocket, RI, to Austin E. Cole, 17 March 1887, BCD 412:343; Sophia C. Mayo, Brockton, to Austin E. Cole, 14 February 1904, BCD 412:340; Mary R. Borden, Pierce TX, and Roger B. and Minne C. Cole, to Harriet M. Cole, 14 December 1928, BCD 506:84.
[7] See 1985 MHC building form for 20 Salt Pond Road, based on researched by local historian Elizabeth Pratt; on Hattie Cole see "Harwich: Was Native of Harwich," *Hyannis Patriot*, 23 March 1933, 4,
[8] Alabama F. Weekes, Clarissa D. Walker, Mary Josephine Nickerson, Lawrence F. Nickerson, Harwich; and Albert M. Nickerson, Dennis, to Leslie E. Chase, 2 November 1934, BCD 507:84. According to local historian Elizabeth Pratt, Chase, then the town clerk, bought the building at the behest of the Cobb family, who wanted it to house guests and to keep it from deteriorating.
[9] Leslie E. Chase to Robert T. and Ruth Helen Boddy Weston, Schenectady NY, 29 October 1936, BCD 524:148.
[10] On Weston see *Boston Globe*, 3 January 1930, 4; 19 June 1930, 25; 15 November 1930, 6; 21 May 1941, 6; 8 December 1941, 24; 31 October 1958, 28; and 21 January 1966, 26; see also "Rev. Robert T. Weston Sr.," *Chicago Tribune*, 20 March 1988.
[11] "Eastham," *Hyannis Patriot*, 10 June 1937, 3.

In 1988, three years after her husband's death, Grace Vance Jewell sold 20 Salt Pond Road to Patricia Thomasson, who owned it for five years and sold it to Daniel C. Pease Jr. and his wife Hazel, who owned it for the next five years. Edward Johns of Salt Pond Nominee Trust acquired the property in December 1999, and in 2002 Johns transferred title to the property to himself individually; in 2017 Johns sold 20 Salt Pond Road to Brian K. and Jane M. Conboy of Old Tappan, New Jersey.[12]

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MAPS
Rogers, Josiah, Elijah Knowles, and Simeon Kingman. A Map of Eastham. 1795.
Hales, John G. *Plan of Eastham and Orleans*. 1831.
Walling, Henry F. *Map of the Counties of Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket Massachusetts Based upon the Trigonometrical Survey of the State*. New York: D. R. Smith and Co.,1858.
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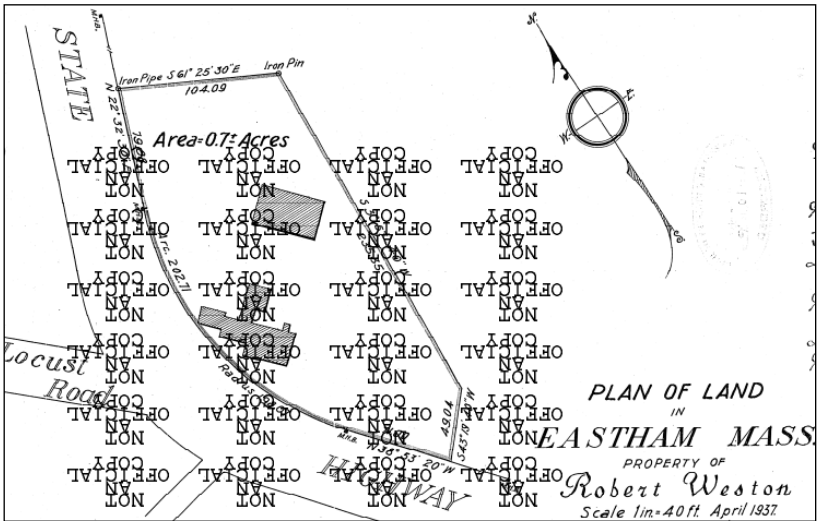
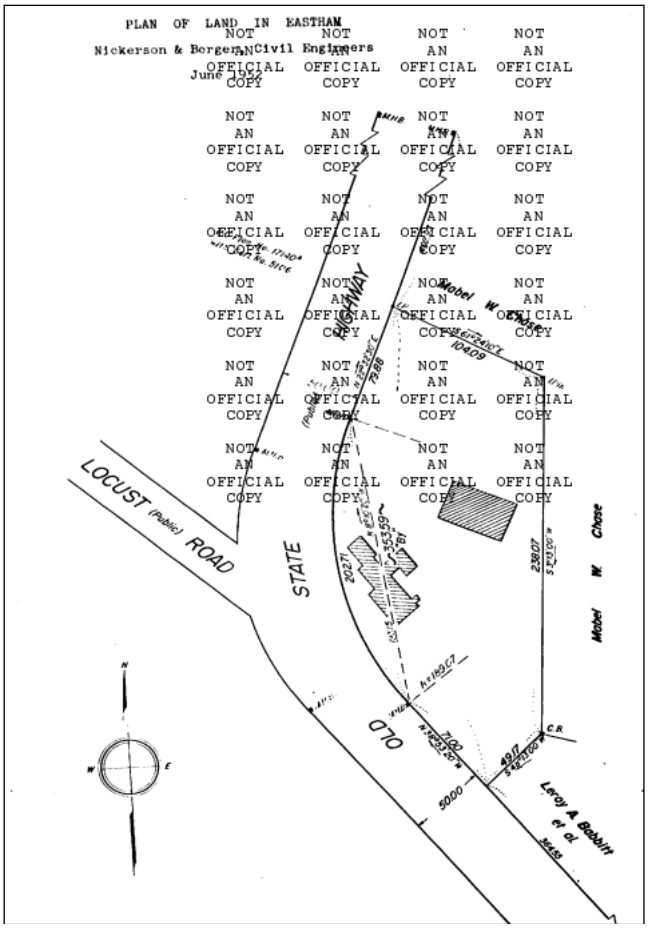
[12] Commonwealth of Massachusetts Land Court in re: petition 23820 of Robert T. and Ruth Helen Boddy Weston, Louisville KY, 4 September 1953, Certificate of Title 15649; Robert T. and Ruth Helen Boddy Weston, Louisville KY, to Frederick H. and Grace Vance Jewell, Dobbs Ferry NY, 14 September 1953, Certificate 15710; Grace Vance Jewell, Salt Pond Rad, to Patricia Thomasson, 8 August 1988, Certificate 115079; Patricia Thomasson to Daniel C. Pease Jr. and Hazel A. Pease, 30 June 1993, Certificate 130637; Daniel C. Pease Jr. and Hazel A. Pease to Bruce T. and Emily C. Guptill, Norwalk CT, 16 October 1998, Certificate 150511; Bruce T. and Emily C. Guptill, Manchester CT, to Edward Johns, trustee Salt Pond Nominee Trust, 31 December 1999, Certificate 156172; Edward F. Johns, trustee Salt Pond Nominee Trust, to Edward F. Johns, 20 Salt Pond Road, 19 August 2002, Certificate 166329; Edward F. Johns, Marblehead, to Brian K. and Jane M. Conboy, Old Tappan NJ, 27 July 2017, Certificate 213627. See also "Plan of Land in Eastham Mass. Property of Robert Weston," April 1937, BCD 56:13, and "Plan of Land in Eastham," June 1952, LCP 23820-A.

SUPPLEMENTAL IMAGES



The 20 Salt Pond Road house and barn are depicted on Robert Weston's 1937 plan (BCP 56:13, above) and the 1952 Land Court plan 23820-A (below).



PHOTOGRAPHS

(credit Larson Fisher Associates, 2019 unless otherwise noted)

Detail view of front façade from SW.

View from NE.

View of barn from NW.